

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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R 220807Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6625
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 17854

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (EO TAGS AND SUBJ ADDED)

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, EAID, ASEAN, JA, TH
SUBJ: JAPANESE EMBASSY ACCOUNT OF FONMIN SONODA VISIT
TO THAILAND.

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

1. SUMMARY: IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF JUNE 21, JAPANESE
EMBASSY REVIEWED MAIN DEVELOPMENTS DURING VISIT TO THAILAND
OF JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTER SONODA JUNE 16-20. PURPOSE OF
VISIT WAS TO DEVELOP FURTHER THE POLITICAL RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN JAPAN AND THAILAND AND TO EXPRESS SUPPORT FOR ASEAN.
DURING THE VISIT, SONODA PUBLICLY LINKED THAI SECURITY WITH
JAPANESE INTERESTS AND PROMISED TO STEP UP JAPANESE
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ECONOMIC AND DIPLOMATIC SUPPORT TO BOLSTER THAI SECURITY
INTERESTS. SINO-SOVIET AND INDOCHINESE TENSIONS FIGURED IN
THE TALKS. IN THE ATMOSPHERE OF GENERALLY SUPPORTING
IMPROVED TIES WITH THE PRC AS AN IMPORTANT MEANS OF
ENHANCING ASIAN AND REGIONAL STABILITY, PM KRIANGSAK
ALSO ADVOCATED CONCLUSION OF THE JAPAN-CHINA PEACE AND
FRIENDSHIP TREATY. END SUMMARY

2. DURING HIS JUNE 16-20 VISIT TO THAILAND, JAPANESE FONMIN SUNAO SONODA WISHED TO STRESS THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN JAPAN AND BOTH ASEAN AND THAILAND, ACCORDING TO JAPANESE EMBASSY ACCOUNT PROVIDED US JUNE 21. JAPANESE EMBASSY SAID THAT SONODA WAS FOLLOWING THROUGH ON PROMISES MADE BY PM FUKUDA DURING HIS SWING THROUGH THE ASEAN STATES LAST YEAR TO EXPAND THE DIMENSIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JAPAN AND THE ASEAN STATES BEYOND THE MORE NARROWLY COMMERCIAL DEFINITION OF THE PAST. TO ACCOMPLISH THIS PURPOSE, SONODA HELD TALKS JUNE 17 IN PATTAYA WITH ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS AND WITH THAI LEADERS IN BANGKOK JUNE 19-20. HE CONFERRED WITH PM KRIANGSAK, FONMIN UPPADIT, AND DEPUTY PM (ECONOMICS) SUNTHON HONGLADAROM. HE ALSO CALLED ON THE KING. SONODA PRESENTED PM KRIANGSAK WITH A SAMURAI SWORD AND WAS AWARDED A DEGREE FROM CHULALONGKHON UNIVERSITY.

3. ALTHOUGH THE JAPANESE EMBOFF SAID THAT THE PRIMARY CONCERN OF THE ASEAN MINISTERS WAS ECONOMIC, THEY ALSO VOICED WORRY OVER THE TENSIONS BETWEEN CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM AND BETWEEN VIETNAM AND CHINA. IN THIS CONTEXT, THEY EXPRESSED THE HOPE TO SONODA THAT JAPAN WOULD NOT RPT NOT PROVIDE "TOO MUCH" ECONOMIC SUPPORT TO INDOCHINA, ESPECIALLY TO VIETNAM, AS COMPARED
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WITH JAPANESE AID TO THE ASEAN STATES. JAPANESE EMBOFF SAID THAT SONODA ECHOED PM FUKUDA'S ASSURANCES FROM LAST YEAR THAT JAPAN WOULD FAVOR ASEAN STATES OVER INDOCHINA. AT THE SAME TIME, LIMITED ASSISTANCE TO INDOCHINA WOULD FACILITATE PEACEFUL DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGION AND FOSTER ASEAN GOALS, SONODA CONTENTED. THE MINISTERS SOUGHT AND RECEIVED SONODA'S PROMISE TO BRING THEIR VIEWS AND CONCERNS TO THE ATTENTION OF THE U.S., CANADA AND EEC AT THE FORTHCOMING SUMMIT IN BONN. JAPANESE DETECTED GENERAL APPROVAL OF DEVELOPING JAPAN-PRC TIES AS A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR IN GENERAL STABILITY IN THE SE AS WELL AS NE ASIAN REGION. A PRO-CHINA, ANTI-SOVIET BIAS ON THE PART OF THAI LEADERS WAS CLEAR, ACCORDING TO JAPANESE EMBOFF.

4. IN GENERAL, DURING CONVERSATIONS WITH THE THAIS SONODA'S PRIMARY GOAL WAS TO DEVELOP A POLITICAL DIALOGUE AND INDICATE JAPANESE SUPPORT FOR THAILAND IN ITS FRONT-LINE" POSITION IN ASEAN. JAPANESE EMBOFF SAID THAT SONODA NOTED THE VULNERABLE GEOGRAPHIC POSITION OF THAILAND AND THE ECONOMIC COSTS TO BANGKOK OF PROTECTING THAI SECURITY. ALTHOUGH

JAPAN COULD NOT ASSIST DIRECTLY TO MEET THAILAND'S SECURITY NEEDS, AS SONODA ALSO TOLD THE PRESS, "THAI SECURITY IS SIGNIFICANT AND RELATED TO THE PROSPERITY OF JAPAN IN PEACE". JAPAN WOULD TRY TO HELP THROUGH EXPANDED ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, THROUGH STRENGTHENED POLITICAL RELATIONS, AND THROUGH DIPLOMATIC SUPPORT

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CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

5. IN THE CONTEXT OF SUPPORTING THAI SECURITY, ACCORDING TO JAPANESE EMBOFF, SONODA INDICATED TO THAIS THAT TOKYO WOULD BE WILLING TO CONSIDER ADDITIONAL PROJECT AID TO THAILAND AND SOUGHT PROPOSALS FOR SPECIFIC PROJECTS FROM BANGKOK. BOTH SIDES EMPHASIZED THE DESIRABILITY OF TARGETING RURAL AREAS IN SUCH PROJECT AID. SONODA ALSO TOLD THE PRESS THAT THIS AID WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THAI SECURITY.

6. TO THE PRESS, SONODA ALSO EMPHASIZED THE POLITICAL-DIP SUPPORT JAPAN HOPED TO PROVIDE THAILAND TO BOLSTER THAI SECURITY NEEDS. HE MENTIONED TOKYO'S DIALOGUE WITH THE EUROPEANS AND US AS POSSIBLE CHANNELS THROUGH WHICH JAPAN COULD HELP FOSTER THAI INTERESTS. SCANNING HIS NOTES, JAPANESE EMBOFF EM-

PHASIZED AGAIN THE DESIRE IN TOKYO TO CULTIVATE A POL-
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ITICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THAILAND TO CONTRIBUTE TO THAI
SECURITY INTERESTS.

7. SINO-SOVIET ISSUES ALSO FIGURED PROMINENTLY IN THE
DISCUSSIONS. SONODA, ACCORDING TO JAPANESE EMBOFF, VOICED
CONCERN THAT SINO-SOVIET RIVALRY, AS DISPLAYED THROUGH
THE INDOCHINESE POWERS, COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT SECURITY AND
STABILITY IN THE REGION.

8. PM KRIANGSAK PUBLICLY, AS WELL AS IN HIS TALKS WITH
SONODA, STATED THAT HE SHARED THE BELIEF THAT A FRIENDSHIP TREATY
BETWEEN JAPAN AND CHINA WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO ESTAB-
LISHING PEACE AND STABILITY IN ASIA. SONODA QUOTED KRIANGSAK AS
SAYING THAT IMPROVEMENT IN SINO-JAPANESE RELATIONS WILL
BENEFIT THAILAND AS WELL AS OTHER NATIONS IN THE REGION. AT HIS
PRESS CONF, SONODA SAID THAT JAPAN WAS "DETERMINED TO PROCEED
WITH ITS FORMULAED PLAN TO SIGN THE PEACE TREATY (WITH
CHINA) IN SPITE OF REPEATED OPPOSITION OF THE SOVIET UNION...
OTHERWISE, JAPAN WOULD LOSE THE CONFIDENCE OF ASIA IN GENERAL AND
ASEAN IN PARTICULAR," SONODA SAID. SONODA COMPARED SOVIET REMON-
STRANCES OVER THE PROPOSED TREATY TO A TAPE RECORDER.
"LIKE THE RAIN IN BANGKOK, IT COMES AND GOES," HE TOLD THE
PRESS.

9. AT A LUNCH HOSTED JUNE 19 BY JAPANESE AMB HIROSHI HITOMI,
SONODA ENUNCIATED THE CONCEPT OF THE "ASIAN MIND." EMPHAS-
IZING SPIRITUAL AS OPPOSED TO MATERIAL VALUES IN ASIAN INTER-
DEPENDENCE (TO THE MARKED CHAGRIN OF THE THAI PRESS), SONODA
CALLED FOR INCREASED EXCHANGE IN THREE AREAS: THE CULTURAL FIELD,
DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND YOUTH EXCHANGE.

10. COMMENT: THE JAPANESE BELIEVE THAT THE VISIT BY SONODA
ADVANCED JAPAN'S RELATIONSHIP BEYOND EARLIER ECONOMICA-COMMERCIAL
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CONFINES, PUSHED FURTHER INTO POLITICAL DIALOGUE, AND,
CLEARLY ALLUDED TO SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS AS AN IMPORTANT,
DRIVING ELEMENT IN JAPAN'S RELATIONS WITH THAILAND.
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